

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended): A coating ~~[[8], particularly]]~~ for a cutting tool, comprising

a wear-protection layer ~~[[9]]~~ having a metallic-crystalline structure,

a top layer ~~(12) having a limited adhesion to the wear-protection layer (9) and/or,~~

and

a separating layer ~~[[11]]~~ applied to at least one portion of the wear-protection layer ~~[[9]]~~ and arranged between the wear-protection layer ~~[[9]]~~ and the top layer ~~[[12);]]~~,

wherein the separating layer ~~[[11]]~~ has a structure which is not metallic-crystalline and limits the adhesion of the top layer ~~[[12)]]~~ to the wear-protection layer ~~[[9)]]~~, and

wherein the separating layer (i) contains or is a chemical compound with a preponderantly covalent bond, (ii) is strongly non-stoichiometrically composed, or (iii) is a strongly stressed layer.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the top layer ~~[[12)]]~~ has a color which perceptively differs from ~~[[the]]~~ a color of the wear-protection layer ~~[[9)]]~~.

4. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the top layer ~~[[12]]~~ is a ZrC, CrC, ZrN, CrN, TiN, a TiC, a HfC or a HfN layer.

5. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim ~~[[2]]~~ 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the top layer ~~[[12]]~~ has a metallic-crystalline structure.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the separating layer ~~[[11]]~~ is an oxide layer containing at least one metal ~~[[of a]]~~ from the IVth or Vth [[side]] group of the chemical periodic system of elements.

8. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the metal ~~[[M]]~~ is an element of the IVth ~~[[side]]~~ group ~~and is preferably titanium or zirconium.~~

9. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 7, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the metal ~~[[M]]~~ is an element of the Vth ~~[[side]]~~ group.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the separating layer ~~[(11)]~~ has an inner stress which significantly differs from ~~[[the]]~~ an inner stress of the wear-protection layer and the top layer ~~[(12)]~~.

14. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the separating layer is a DLC layer.

15. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the separating layer is an MOS₂ layer.

16. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the wear-protection layer ~~[(9)]~~ is a TiAlN layer or a CrAlN layer.

17. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the wear-protection layer ~~[(9)]~~ has a single-layer structure.

18. (Currently Amended): The coating as defined in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the wear-protection layer ~~[(9)]~~ has a multi-layer structure.

19 (Currently Amended) ~~A The use of a coating, as defined in one of the foregoing claims, on a cutting tool comprising:~~

a basic body ~~[(7)]~~ made of a hard material; and

a coating which is applied to the basic body, the coating comprising a metallic hard material layer as a wear-protection layer, a top layer, and a separating layer applied to at least one portion of the wear-protection layer and arranged between the wear-protection layer and the top layer,

wherein the separating layer has a structure which is not metallic-crystalline, and

wherein the separating layer (i) contains or is a chemical compound with a preponderantly covalent bond, (ii) is strongly non-stoichiometrically composed, or (iii) is a strongly stressed layer.

20. (Currently Amended): A ~~[[method]]~~ cutting tool as defined in claim 19, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the wear-protection layer ~~[(9)]~~ is provided at least on a clearance surface ~~[(3)]~~ and at least on a rake surface ~~[(4)]~~, while the top layer ~~[(12)]~~ does not cover or only partially covers the clearance surface ~~[(3)]~~ and/or the rake surface ~~[(2)]~~.

21. (Currently Amended): A method of making a cutting tool, comprising:
first applying in a PVD coating process a coating to a basic body ~~[(7)]~~ in a layer sequence including a metallic hard material layer as a wear-protection layer, a separating layer applied at least to one portion of the wear-protection layer, and a top layer on the separating layer according to one of claims 1 to 18, and

subsequently removing the top layer [(12)] from selected upper surface portions by a mechanical abrading process,

wherein the separating layer has a structure which is not metallic-crystalline, wherein the wear-protection layer has a metallic-crystalline structure, and wherein the separating layer (i) contains or is a chemical compound with a preponderantly covalent bond, (ii) is strongly non-stoichiometrically composed, or (iii) is a strongly stressed layer.

22. (Currently Amended): The method as defined in claim 21, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the top layer [(12)] is removed by a sandblasting process.

23. (Currently Amended): The method as defined in claim 21, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein all the layers of the coating [(8)] are applied in a single PVD process.

24. (New): The coating as defined in claim 2, wherein the top layer is a decorative layer.

25. (New): The coating as defined in claim 8, wherein the metal is titanium or zirconium.

26. (New): The coating as defined in claim 1, wherein the wear protection layer is predominately in compression, the separating layer is predominately in tension, and the top layer is predominately in compression.

27. (New): The coating as defined in claim 1, wherein the separating layer disrupts or disturbs a metallic-crystalline bond between the top layer and the wear-protection layer.